

From: Maria Belknap [mailto:emariab@earthlink.net]
Sent: Monday, August 29, 2016 12:51 PM
To: Stein, Kris -FS <krisstein@fs.fed.us>
Subject: [CAUTION: Suspicious Link]RE: LPSP Landowner Questions & Comments : Belknap

Hi Chris-

Thank you. I received your vm, but am prepping for a client audit. May I call you Thursday?

I will next be in the County October 16 and am glad to meet with you at that time. Please let me know. I understand your schedule is busy, so it might be a good idea to schedule a date now.

Thank you.

maria

-----Original Message-----

From: "Stein, Kris -FS"

Sent: Aug 29, 2016 12:42 PM

To: "emariab@earthlink.net"

Cc: "Montoya, Tom -FS"

Subject: RE: LPSP Landowner Questions & Comments : Belknap

Hey Maria – I left you a voice mail yesterday. I would really like to visit with you soon regarding the Lostine project so that we can answer or clear up any questions you may have. I doesn't sound like the information you got from your encounter with an engineer was very accurate, so would love to clear that up.

Please – feel you can contact me at any time if you have a question or are feeling at all uneasy about the project. Based on your concerns we are making contact with the other Lapover property owners so that we can re-visit the project design. We are hoping to meet with John Bambi in the Lostine on Sept 6 and meeting with Eva and Joe either that day or sooner. I would love it if you could come up but completely understand it's not very convenient. So, please let me know the best way to connect.

Thanks so much – looking forward to talking soon.

Kris

Kris Stein
District Ranger
Forest Service
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, on
the Eagle Cap and Wallowa Valley
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Caring for the land and serving people

From: emariab@earthlink.net [mailto:emariab@earthlink.net]
Sent: Sunday, August 28, 2016 3:47 PM
To: McGraw, Michael - FS, Joseph, OR <michaelmcgraw@fs.fed.us>
Cc: kathleen_cathey@wyden.senate.gov; Karen_Wagner@merkley.senate.gov; Stein, Kris -FS <krisstein@fs.fed.us>; tmontoya@fs.fed; Pena, James - FS <jpena@fs.fed.us>
Subject: [CAUTION: Suspicious Link]LPSP Landowner Questions & Comments : Belknap

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Questions: Contact Client Technology Services (CTS) via email at (Spam.Abuse@wdc.usda.gov)

Dear Michael, I originally emailed the following to you on 8/13. Since I have not received reply from you, I am resending with expanded dialogue regarding the proposed LPSP and my concerns with it.

Sincerely,
maria

From: Maria Belknap <emariab@earthlink.net>
Date: Saturday, August 13, 2016 at 7:34 AM
To: "Mcgraw, Michael - FS, Joseph, OR" <michaelmcgraw@fs.fed.us>
Subject: Re: LPSP Update and Questions

Hi Michael-
I hope this finds you enjoying the summer.

The proposed LPSP has, from the beginning, has concerned me. Further, as the summer has progressed, it appears much of what was communicated to landowners regarding the nature and scope of the LPSP—both in meetings and public documents—was misrepresented. A random meeting with an FS Engineer in the canyon corridor who provided information regarding the LPSP contrary to that previously provided landowners. Now my concerns are heightened.

The Engineer stated:

1. The project scope is 1) commercial thin and 2) fuel reduction
2. The FS would like "a 60% tree cut in Lostine Canyon, yet public backlash may limit the cut to 20%"
3. The FS is planning 10 E-W, canyon-spanning clear cuts between Pole Bridge and Two Pan
4. Restrictions imposed by the WSRA designation and the Lostine Canyon Management Plan, are not "binding" due to the public safety nature of the LPSP.
5. The FS intends to open the canyon to fire wood cutting

Since the above were not discussed in the Landowner Scoping meeting in June, please provide clarification.

- The FS is claiming that it collaborated with local landowners and others. This is inaccurate. The FS has informed landowners what it plans on doing in the river corridor but has not “collaborated” with landowners or other stakeholders. Proposed management activities in the Lostine River Corridor deserve a robust transparent public process that looks at alternatives to the LPSP through analysis and documentation in an EIS or EA. This would provide the FS an opportunity to work with the public and Landowners to develop a project that finds a way to balance protection of this unique area with public safety.
- When will the FS conduct an EA/EIS for the LPSP and when and how will this results of this study be disseminated to the public?
- In the June Land Owner meeting regarding the LPSP, we were told :
 - WSR restrictions would be adhered to. Will the FS adhere to WSR use restrictions vis-a-vis the LPSP?
 - Old growth trees would not be cut. Does the FS intend to cut old growth trees as a component of the LPSP, specifically the commercial thin component?
 - Cuts would not exceed 200 feet from the road. Is this in fact true or are other plans in consideration?
- Cut Criteria
 - Is the FS proposing down and dead removal or down, dead, and live tree harvesting?
 - Is the FS proposing a sweeping thin of both high and low-value wood product or will the cut criteria be tiered, attention paid to removal of less-desirable target species first, e.g., White Fir, Spruce, leaving Larch, Lodgepole, Ponderosa, Hemlock, etc.?
 - What percent tree cut/removal is the FS seeking in Lostine Canyon?
 - Does the FS plan to cut in the Wilderness? East-West spanning firebreaks would clearly overstep the wilderness boundary.
- Clear Cuts
 - In the land owner meeting, we were never advised of the commercial nature of the cut nor that it would involve clear cuts. The planned clear-cuts, logging in sensitive old growth forests, extensive “danger” tree removal, and temporary road construction are ill advised and won’t do much to make the public or firefighters safer when a wildfire occurs in the corridor. The proposed activities will however have an adverse effect on the wild and scenic nature of the corridor along with the rare and threatened species that call it home.
- How does the FS intend to protect wildlife habitat, species diversity, forest health (through species selection and diversity) and the fragile vegetative understory? The wild and scenic nature of the corridor much be vigorously maintained.
- Firebreaks
 - If firebreaks are considered, what is FS criteria for locating the cuts, where are cuts currently suggested ,and what are the proposed sizes of the cuts?
 - Does the FS propose cuts below the road, e.g., the West side of Lostine River Road or closer than 200 feet to the river, across the river or into the wilderness?
- Firewood Cutting
 - If firewood cutting is allowed under the LPSP, how does the FS propose to control firewood cut permits, specifically cut locations, permitting award criteria, cut criteria (flush stumps etc) and will sequential liability be enforced? How will the FS protect the fragile riparian zones, wildlife, endangered species, visual impacts,

road expansion (not permitted under the Lostine Canyon Management Plan) in an unsupervised cut environment?

- When do you expect the FS to survey the North and South Lapover property lines?
- Will the FS require reseeding of cut and cleared areas?
- Where does the FS anticipate locating equipment staging?
- Lostine River WSR Designation
 - Will the FS adhere to WSR use restrictions vis-a-vis the LPSP?
 - To protect the fragile Lostine River ecosystem/riparian zone, the Lostine Canyon Plan specifically states that campgrounds below the road shall not be expanded, that new campgrounds or other developments shall not be located below the road, and that dispersed canyon camping will not be permitted. Does the FS intend to adhere to these use limitations?
 - Since the LPSP will create opportunity via open space, how will the FS prevent dispersed camping in the Lostine Canyon?
 - How will the FS protect the fragile riparian ecosystem?
 - Does the FS intend to conduct a survey of site locations of protected vegetative species? How will the FS protect and prevent eradication of these species in an otherwise unmonitored cut environment?
- I understand that the FS is seeking exemption from the NEPA process for the LPSP. The LPSP does not fit into any of the agency's authorities to categorically exclude the project from NEPA.

In addition to the above-referenced specific questions, I would like to provide you a bit of my history in this canyon and to go on record with my over-arching concerns with the LPSP.

My family has been involved with Lapover Ranch located in the Lostine Canyon since the 1950s and have owned Lapover since 1976. During my college years I worked both as a back country ranger in the Wallowa Whitman and as the Lostine Canyon Guard, stationed in the Canyon. I know the history of the canyon, the people who have and continue to frequent it, and possess a thorough understanding of the delicate balance of this canyon garnered through decades of intimate exposure. As such, I feel deep stewardship for the Lostine Canyon and its voiceless inhabitants and want to go on record with my concerns with the LPSP.

The Lostine River Corridor is one of the most important places on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest—the river corridor an artery to the wilderness surrounding it. This scenic corridor is close to population centers of Wallowa County and provides access to popular trailheads and camping areas. The narrow valley bottom is surrounded by steep glaciated slopes making it disproportionately important for a variety of wildlife (including numerous rare and endangered plants and mammals). This river itself is important for Chinook and other fish as well as the human communities that appreciate them.

The Lostine River is designated as Wild and Scenic. The lower 11 miles are designated as recreational (however, the west side of the river is in wilderness and shall be managed as a wild river). The outstanding remarkable values for the Lostine River include: scenery, recreation, fisheries, wildlife, and vegetation/botany. (<http://www.rivers.gov/documents/plans/lostine-plan.pdf>). The river corridor supports a diversity of wildlife habitats and species, including Rocky Mountain elk, deer, black bear, mountain lion, beaver, otter, mink and other small mammals as well as the endangered Wolverine and Kit Fox. Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, indigenous to the Eagle Cap Wilderness, have been reintroduced in the Hurricane Creek-Lostine River drainage. Peregrine falcons, bald eagles and a large variety of other birds inhabit the area. The river supports spring and fall Snake River Chinook salmon (listed as threatened under ESA), steelhead and bull trout.

This unique area is home to numerous proposed, endangered, threatened and sensitive (PETS) species of plants. These include 11 species of moonwort and the northern twayblade. The rarity of finding so many moonworts in one locality provides the opportunity for scientific research and a delight for botanists. <http://www.rivers.gov/rivers/lostine.php>

The scoping notice says that LPSP will emphasize public safety while reducing effects on other resource values. The FS consider an alternative framing of the LPSP purpose, harmonizing the diverse and important values associated with this project area.

Safety should not trump other values, but instead safety goals should be sought to the extent they are compatible with other important values herein addressed.

The FS has a duty to protect and enhance outstandingly remarkable values. Within the framework of the Wild And Scenic River Act, protecting public safety is part of the recreational outstandingly remarkable value. Notably, the Wild & Scenic River Plan has a conflict resolution clause which puts recreation after all of the other values. This means that the FS should err on the side of conserving natural values when designing and implementing the LPSP, ergo, use a light touch.

"Conflict Resolution. If conflicts arise between OR values which cannot be resolved within the direction of the Act or Management Plan, then they shall be resolved according to the following priorities: 1) fisheries, 2) vegetation/botanic, 3) Wildlife, 4) Scenic, and 5) Recreation."

1993 Lostine River Plan at page 5.

The Lostine River Plan says that effort to address fire hazard must be "in line" with protection and enhancement of outstandingly remarkable values. Thus fuel reduction cannot trump wild & scenic river values.

"Compete a fire hazard analysis for the Recreational River segment by Jan 30, 1994. Implement those recommendations that are in line with the Management Plan and protect and enhance OR values."

1993 Lostine River Plan at page 7.

The FS should consider various ways to managing safety hazards. They can reduce or eliminate the hazard itself, or they can manage people to reduce or eliminate the human hazard. This is supported in the Lostine River Plan:

"Consider a specific fire closure order for the river corridor or sections of the river corridor during the peak fire season."

"Implement an educational program which may include posters, bulletin boards, prevention personnel, or other effective means to inform the public."

The Lostine River Plan (p 12) emphasizes "thinning from below" that does "not rely on the use of heavy equipment on site." Fuel reduction should focus on surface and ladder fuels. The FS should NOT focus on removal of canopy fuels. Canopy fuels present a low hazard, and they actually help moderate severe fire effects by helping to maintain a cool-moist- less-windy microclimate, and by suppressing the establishment and growth of surface and ladder fuels. Canopy fuel are also an important component of the scenic and habitat values of the corridor.

The River Plan calls for a 50-200 foot "fish management zone" with minimal vegetation management, adjacent to all waterbodies.

I urge the FS to focus on trees that pose an imminent hazard to high use areas. Trees that are more than 150 feet from the road, or leaning away from the road, are not generally a significant hazard. The FS must carefully balance the competing values when hazard trees are identified in the RHCA. Large hazard trees should not be removed. Large wood is not a significant fire hazard but large wood does provide significant value to fish and wildlife. In this corridor, the FS should consider public education about the importance of evacuating in the event of fire.

The scenic ORV emphasizes "retention and preservation" of vegetation (The 1993 Lostine River Plan, page 10). This indicates the need for a light touch approach to reducing fuels. The River plan adopted a 1992 view shed corridor plan, which the FS should post this on the website.

The FS should protect the aquatic and terrestrial habitat values associated with the PACFISH Riparian Habitat Conservation Area. As such, fuel treatments should focus on the side of the road opposite the river. Finally, treatments between the road and the river should be very minimal.

I look forward to hearing from you.

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World Peace through Inner Peace

P _____
Save trees...live digitally

From: "Mcgraw, Michael - FS, Joseph, OR" <michaelsmcgraw@fs.fed.us>
Date: Tuesday, July 19, 2016 at 9:03 AM
To: Maria Belknap <emariab@earthlink.net>
Subject: LPSP Update

Good Afternoon,

We would like to share a news release informing you of the status for the Lostine Public Safety Project. Please see the attached document.

Your continued involvement throughout the process of this project is greatly appreciated by the Forest Service. Throughout this process you have provided valuable input, feedback, and support to design a project benefitting your public lands. Thank you again for your efforts directed towards the Lostine Public Safety Project.

Michael McGraw
Writer/ Analyst Intern

Forest Service
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

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